



▲ “Native Boys’ Calabash Race in the Senegal Village”, Scottish National Exhibition, Edinburgh, drawn postcard, 1908.

► R.L., “Kein Rassenhaß bei Hagenbeck. Madame, Liebenswürdigkeiten sind hier verboten” (No Racial Hatred at Hagenbeck. Madame, Familiarities Are Forbidden), Hamburg, drawn postcard, 1912.

♣ “Baka. Pygmées du Cameroun” (Baka. Pygmies from Cameroon), Yvoir (Belgium), signage for the exhibition, 2002.

► ► “African Village”, Augsburg Zoo, photograph, 2005.



Baka Pygmies in Wallonia in 2002, and the “African Village” at Augsburg Zoo in 2005

In the summer of 2002, eight Baka – “Pygmies” hailing from Cameroon’s tropical forest – took residence in the Rainforest Natural Park, in the Walloon village of Yvoir in southern Belgium. They were part of an at once educational and humanitarian exhibition. The Baka performed in one of the sections: for part of the day, they stayed in a meadow, among the leaf huts which they had built themselves, before going to a courtyard where they carried out “traditional Baka dances”. Three weeks after the show opened, protests arose from organizations of Africans and migrants, with cries of “human zoo”, taken from the title of the eponymous book that had just been published. Those protesting made the point that, as a human zoo, the project was morally as reprehensible as its predecessor at the Tervuren Exposition

Universelle in 1897. The expression “human zoo” instantly won over the national and international press, which echoed the protests until the exhibition closed early and the Baka were sent home. In June 2005, Augsburg Zoo launched “African Village”, a four-day event during which Africans were meant to exhibit their art, their food and their music on stands and platforms throughout the zoo. As soon as the fair was announced, voices were raised in protest, coming in particular from the Afro-German organization Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland. They emphasized the similarities with the colonial *Völkerschauen*, but did not overlook the sad lot of people of African origin under the Nazi regime.

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